Afghanaid

RAPID RURAL APPRAISAL (RRA)

REPORT ON

BASIC NEEDS

IN

TULAK, SHAHRAK & CHIKHCHARAN

DISTRICTS

GHOR PROVINCE

By the

MANAGER OF COMMUNICATION

&

AGRICULTURALIST

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CONTENTS

A. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The purpose of this report is to present the findings of the **Rapid** Rural **Appraisal(RRA)** carried out in three districts (Tulak, Shahrak and Chikhcharan) in Ghor (Appendix A). The aim of the RRA was to gather information on the ability of the communities to meet their basic needs.

Ghor is remote and mountainous province with extreme climate. The province is traditionally marginalized, has at times been severely affected by occasional famines and is known as a food deficit area.

The economy of the household in Ghor is based on agriculture and animal husbandry. Irrigated land is at premium. Rain fed agriculture is the major source of food production which is generally low and highly dependent on timely rain fall. In other words food security is highly vulnerable to nature. 15-20 % of farming households are annually affected by "The hungry season" during pre-harvest period. They cannot produce enough.

Health care facilities non existent in Shahrak and Tulak districts and at Chikhcharan, the center of the province, health service is poor.

Animal diseases inflect heavy losses on the livestock population during winter. for example 15-25% of the goats and sheep die of diseases each winter.
Logistics are difficult, travel is time consuming. Roads are rough, get blocked in winter. Transportation costs are very high. Roads are going to be a constraint on future operations.

The government is in the hands of Jamiat, the security situation is good.
There is immense scope for the improvement of handicraft industry specially carpet and gleam weaving.

B. BACKGROUND:

Ghor is the west - central province of Afghanistan, bounded by the provinces of Jozjan, Faryab and Badghis in the north, Herat and Farah in the west, Helmand, Oruzgan in the south and Bamyan in the east. It is about 35,764 square Kilometres in size ranking 7th in size amongst the provinces of Afghanistan.

The economy of the province is based on Agro-Pastoral systems. 80% of the population is occupied in agriculture and animal husbandry which are supplementary to each other. Almost every household keeps a small flock of goats and sheep and work in agriculture as well.

Ghor is famous for its rich alpine pastures and animal husbandry. According to Khwaja Mohammad, head of Agriculture department in the province, a record number of about two million animals were officially and unofficially sold annually at the Chikhcharan Ganj (live stock market) before the war (1978).

The population of the province in 1990 was estimated to be 302,497 (UNIDATA). Chikhcharan is the centre of the province. Except for the population of Lal u sarjangal, which belongs to the Shia faction of Islam, the entire population of the province are Suni Moslems. They all speak Dari.

1. Geographical Features:

Ghor is mountainous, the major mountain ranges of Ferozkoh (Safidkoh), the Seyahkoh, and Band e Bayan ranges stretch east-westerly throughout the province. The altitude of the mountains in the north eastern section of the province is 4,000-5,000 m which gradually decrease in altitude in the south westerly direction. Rivers initiated from the mountains, generally flow to northerly or southerly directions within the country. The famous ones are:

* Murghab Rud
* Hari Rud.
* Farah Rud.
* Khash Rud.
* Tagab Eshlan.

There are numerous high mountains, hills and molls which have shaped the formation of the communities. The province has been carved out into valleys, dales gorges and ravine by nature. The first inhabitants have settled where they found a water source and gradually the communities and villages have evolved around it.

Except the Hazaras living in Lal u Sarjangal district the rest of the entire population is of Taiman tribe. Taiman is also subdivided into other clans. The Ghori (Suri) tribes consider themselves as the direct descendant of the Ghorid dynasty.

The historical importance of Ghor is that it was the heartland of the Ghorid Sultanate (11th - 13th century) which ruled over an area from eastern Iran to Delhi in India and from Marv south to Persian Gulf.

Ghor is divided into six administrative districts of Lal u Sarjangal, Shahrak, Tulak, Tewara, Pasaband, Saghar and Chikhcharan, the center of the province. The three districts visited are:

1.a. Chikhcharan:

It is the centre of Ghor province, located north east of Shahrak and west of Lal u Sarjangal. It also shares borders with the neighbouring provinces of Jozjan, Faryab and Badghis in the north. It is 11763 sq km wide, with a population of 103,400. It is comprised of 155 villages. It is 1412 km away from Kabul (via Herat).

1.b. Tulak district:

A district north east of Farsi district of Farah, north of Saghar, west of Shahrak districts. It is comprised of 192 villages. It has an area of 2955 sq kilometre and the population was estimated 32,800 in 1990.

1.c. Shahrak District:

It is the second largest district in Ghor, situated in the centre, surrounded by Tulak, Saghar, Tewara, Pasaband and Chikhcharan districts. It has an area of 8506 sq Km and the population is 48,200 people.

Estimate of Agricultural area under cultivation

Districts	Land under cultivation		Land under cultivation	
	Irrigated	Non Irrig	Irrig	Non Irrig
. Chikhchara	39.050 J	131,640 J	7,810 H	26,328 H
. Tulak	23.520 J	35,260 J	4,704 H	7,052 H
. Shahrak	42,760 J	84,440 J	8,552 H	16,888 H

Note: J stands for Jerib and **H** for Hectare (1 Jerib=1/5 Hectare)

There are not marked differences in the socio- economic and natural resources of the three districts. However in Tulak carpet weaving

is a major source of income. Mining in the salt mine in Ghok valley, Shahrak district is also a source of income to many disadvantaged households in the area.

2. Climate:

The climate in Ghor varies from place to place: the mountainous areas and the high lands with strong mountain winds such as Lal u Sarjangale, Bayan and Pasaband have severe long winter season (5 months) with heavy snowfall. Summer season is relatively short and only single cropping is possible.

The lowland areas, with lesser altitude and hills, enjoy shorter winters (4 months) such as Saghar, Tagao Eshalan in Tulak and Kamenj in Shahrak. The average temperature during the summer is (+24.9). It is warm enough to allow the fruits and vegetables to grow.

3. Security:

Ghor being situated at the heart of Afghanistan, did not figure very much in the military calculation of the Russian army of occupation, therefor the extent of damage and destruction inflicted has been limited. Only the centers of the districts were in the hands of the government forces. The areas controlled by the government were limited to the rifle range of their militia forces. The countryside was all in the hands of the Mujahideen.
In the course of the fighting the public buildings such as schools, meteorological centers, clinics etc were destroyed and the people living close by were locally displaced. A few immigrated to Iran and Pakistan.

Presently the government is in the hands of Jamiat Party. Tulak district is run by the local Taliban group. Tewara district is run by a commander of Hezbi Islami, but he is in alliance with the government. Security throughout the province is good. Even the security of the Farsi road which was occasionally raided by dacoits, has improved with the advent of the Taliban. However, chances of clash between the rival groups cannot be ruled out.

C. THE ASSIGNMENT:

In accordance with the decision at the strategic meeting (November 1994), Afghanaid decided to launch community development (CD) pilot projects in the poorest provinces of Afghanistan (Badakhshan, Jozjan and Ghor). Therefore a small team was formed and assigned to conduct Rapid Rural Appraisal of Ghor Province. The objective of the appraisal was to highlight the problems of Ghor people in securing their basic needs.

D. METHODOLOGY:

For the purpose of conducting Rapid Rural Appraisal(RRA) in Ghor semi structured dialogues and observations were applied in the villages to learn about the problems of the communities in meeting their basic needs. Thus the following steps were taken:

1. A team of three people was formed; Waheed, Agriculturalist Ghulam Haider, Ex employee of the Department of Rural Development in Ghor (joined in at a later stage), and Asadullah, Communication Manager.

2. Briefing sessions were organized with Mukhtarzada, Socio economist in Mazar e Sharif and with Natiq, CD coordinator in Peshawar to give input on the RRA methodology and to pass on what they had learnt in Badakhshan.

3. Representative districts were preselected on the map and the representative villages in the districts were selected in consultation with the people met mostly during congregations in the mosques to ensure the villages visited were true microcosms of the districts' macrocosm.

4. A total of 25 villages were visited within three districts of Tulak, Shahrak and Chikhcharan, the center of the province (time factor was a constraint).

E. FINDINGS:

1. Making a living:

Farming and animal husbandry, are the two main occupations of the inhabitants. Share cropping, working as shepherds, handicraft, business, carpentry and masonry are amongst the other occupations. A small number of people are employed by the government and some work in Herat and Iran too.

Agricultural, animals and the animal products (Quroot, hide and wool) are the main sources of income. Carpet and gleem weaving provides a meagre amount of cash for the households.

Local employment opportunities are occasionally available for carpenters, bricklayers, tailors, cobblers, blacksmiths, and farriers in the villages. However, the income is not enough to sustain them. The salt mine in Ghok Valley, Shahrak district is another source on income, where every body can dig salt for himself to sell.

Let me recall an unforgettable story about a family we met at Pay Kotel village:

On our return trip to Shahrak we passed an old man who invited us to his house. It was lunch time and our horses seemed more exhausted than us. We accepted and dismounted our horses.

The old man ushered us to one of the two rooms they had in the house. The wife was cooking and the bride was weaving.

For lunch the man set two bowels of Aash before us. At this time his son Habib returned from his work and joined us for lunch, The Aash was nothing but some dough boiled in water. It had no nutritional value.

The gaudy face and shabby clothes the shelter and the food all were vivid indicative of utmost poverty and yet the old man seemed contented. He was grateful to God for what he had. Probably he had not seen a better life to compare it with.

Apologetically I asked the old man if our un expected visit had spoilt their lunch ? He assured me that the food was cooked for charity so that Alah the almighty blesses his family and keeps all the evils away.

Our host, Mohammad was at his fifties. He was hospitable and talkative. He said he had no arable land but a few goat and sheep and a donkey they used for transportation. The old man had once been out of this village some 30 years ago when he did his national service as a soldier in Kabul. His son was the provider and the salt mine was the main source of income.

Habib worked in the salt mine for 3-4 hours daily and dug 20 kgs of rock salt worth 10,000 Afs. Habib wished to work longer hours in the mine but he said he could not bear the smoke for longer hours. Habib said hundreds of miners were working in the cave, each used one or two kerosine lamps for light. The air in the cave became suffocating. He said he could really work and earn more if there were smokeless lights. Habib's wife wove carpet. In fact they were all working but could hardly earn enough to have a better life.

1.a. Farming:

Agriculture and animal husbandry constitute the main occupations of the people in Ghor. Wheat, barley, potatoes and various fruits like apricot, apple and walnuts, are the main product in Ghor. Maize is grown only in the warmer places where the water is not at a premium.

Ghor has about 364240 jeribs (72,848 hectare) of irrigated and 491850 jeribs of rain fed agricultural land. The total area of the cultivable land is estimated to be 856090 jeribs. Pastures and grazing land is estimated to be 1,635500 jeribs.
Despite the enormous size of the cultivable land in Ghor, it cannot produce enough to feed the population because:

* Most of the agriculture land in Ghor is lalmi (rain fed), therefore, the annual yield entirely depends on the amount of timely rainfall in the spring.

* The return ratio of the land is fairly low (**1** to **8-10** for the irrigated and **1** to **5-7** for the rain fed wheat) because of crop disease such as rust and smut and decline in the top soil fertility.

* Lack of sufficient traction power (The oxen or tractor) means the farmers cannot cultivate enough to see them through the year.

* The sowing and planting season in the province is short. The ideal time is (*21 March - 21 April*). Thick blanket of snow on the ground will not permit earlier sowing, and late sowing will expose the crop to early frost bite at the end of its growing season. It is the climatic factor which makes farmers and their livestock in Ghor vulnerable to drought and the subsequent famine.

Patterns of climatic variation in Ghor indicate that every 10-12 years the drought repeats itself (1961,1973). The 1961 drought drastically reduced the number of livestock because of the shortage of fodder on the grazing grounds. The famine in 1973 hit the population so hard that some families were forced to sell and give away their beloved children to others.

River valleys such as Kamenj and Ghok in Shahrak, Charsada in Chikhcharan and Saghar districts produce more fruit and less grains. Quantities of wheat and corn produced locally do not meet their requirements. Therefore, they exchange it with grains in the villages of the neighbouring districts (barter trading).

1.b. Animal husbandry:

Livestock raising is supplementary to agriculture in Ghor. The very livelihood of the farmers depend on it. Livestock produces food (dairy), fibber (the wool and hair), power, clothing, fertilizer, fuel and social status.

Animals in Ghor are traditionally used as an indication of wealth, gifts to resolve conflicts, exchanges to establish marriage alliances and offerings to promote friendship with the others. Provision of meat or a gift of an animal is seen as an expression of goodwill that enhances the family's position in the community.

The average household keeps 10-15 goats and sheep, may be 1-2 oxen, one milking cow and a donkey or a horse. Those who can afford keep large numbers of goats and sheep. Provision of feedstuff for the long winter season has been a constraint and a limiting factor on the size of animal husbandry.

The vast alpine pastures are used by flocks and herds of the livestock owners from neighbouring province of Kandahar, Herat, Nemroz, Faryab and Badgheis. They bring their herds and flocks of animals to the graze 4-5 months (April to September). This movement of livestock from other provinces has caused transmission of diseases and parasites to Ghor.

Lack of veterinary service has resulted in high mortality rate (15-25%) amongst the animals throughout the year, particularly during winter. Prevalence of various diseases such as Anthrax, Entrotexeamia, Foot and Mouth, Contagious ACCP, and sheep Pox have discouraged the livestock owners to maintain large flocks.

2. Household expenditures:

The major areas that an average family spends his income on are as follows:

Food and clothing, seed for the next year's sowing, funeral expenses, health, transportation and wedding costs, 10-20 % tax in cash or kind on the harvest, paying for the expenses of the theological school, paying for the mosques and mullahs.

The wedding costs are not normally met in one year. A considerable amount of annual earnings goes to it for several years.

The rising cost of the consumer goods and commodities i.e. tea, candy, soap clothing and kerosine imported from Herat has made it increasingly difficult for the average village household to make ends meet.

The lack of market for the agricultural and animal products has reversely affected the village community. There is no proportionate increase in the price of the goods the farmers sell with that of what they purchase. Thus the purchasing power of the villagers is constantly weakening.

3. Food and Nutrition:

Whole wheat bread is the staple food in Ghor like any other parts of Afghanistan. Type of food taken in Ghor vary seasonally. Bread and tea or bread with dairy products such as cheese, yogurt, milk, cream and whey is consumed in spring and summer. Shorba (meat), Quroot (dried yogurt balls), potatoes, Aash (some sort of macaroni) and Khalawak (a dish made of flour, oil and boiled water) are eaten during winter. These dishes eaten in winter lack the nutritional value and the users cannot maintain the proper body weight.

Vegetables such as eggplants, turnips, squash, carrots, onions and tomatoes are grown in the areas where irrigation water is plentiful and the climate is warm. Except potatoes, dishes made of other vegetables are not very common.

Consumption of sugar and rice is very rare. Butcheries are not available in the villages. Meat is eaten only during winter when the sick and injured animals are slaughtered.

PRICES OF ESSENTIAL COMMODITIES IN GHOR IN OCTOBER 1995

S/N	Items	Prices /kg in the districts		
		Chikhcharan	Shahrak	Tulak
1	Wheat	1,000	900	900
2	Black Tea	12,000	11,000	11,000
3	Cooking Oil	5,500	5,200	5,200
4	Rice	2,000	1,400	1,400
5	Salt	500	300	300
6	Meat	4,500	4,500	4,000
7	Sugar	3,500	3,350	3,400
8	Meal per plate	3,000	3,000	3,000
9	Kerosine	2,300	2,500	2,000
10	Transport charge /kg	5,00	350	250
11	Transport fare	70,000	60,000	50,000

F. HEALTH AND HEALTH PRACTICES:

1. Drinking Water:

In all of the places visited in Ghor, drinking water was obtained from rivers, springs, nalas, irrigation canals, cisterns and rarely shallow wells. The water resources mentioned were all polluted at some stage. River Hari Rud which flows through Chikhcharan is the main source of drinking water for the inhabitants of Chikhcharan. According to Dr. Ghulam Nabi Yagana, the physician in Chikhcharan hospital, the water has amimia.

Dara e Ghalmin is a long and populace valley in the north of Chikhcharan. 30 villages are located there. Ghalmin Joi (Ghalmin canal) which originates from a series of springs in the upper end of the valley, supplies villagers with irrigation and drinking water. After passing through the first village the water starts get more and more polluted. Men and animals alike use it for drinking. Run off water from the surrounding area flows in to it. Eventually the water which is supposed to be colourless and tasteless turns grey and gives a distinct exotic taste which is an indicator of its uncleanliness.

Likewise, there are other villages such as Ta ab and Sang i kar where the inhabitants are using water with similar problems.

Because of the acute problem of drinking water in Tulak district the government had built a drinking water system before the war. Presently the system is in a state of total disrepair. The reservoir has been filled with mud, the pipes, the plumbing system and the facets all taken away. Thus the residents in Tulak have been left with the uncleaned water in the creek. The residents and their animals drink from the same water source. In short, 70% of the people in Ghor drink unclean water.

2. Health care:

Despite the healthy climate in Ghor the health status is not very good. Lack of health care facilities, poor sanitation, malnutrition and unclean drinking water are amongst the main factors which have affected the health of the people in Ghor.

Endemic diseases in the area vary seasonally. Diarrhoea, typhoid, dysentery and malaria are common in summer, gastrointestinal and respiratory diseases such as bronchitis, pneumonia, measles, pertussis (amongst children), cold and flu are common during winter. living in crowded houses with poor hygiene has created endemic environment for **typhus** and its transition through human body parasites (ie louse mite and flea). A few cases were observed.

Since most of the villages are situated in close proximity of the water sources i.e. the nulla, springs, creeks, rivers, cisterns and irrigation canals, the damp and wet environment has drastically increased the mosquitos population which cause **malaria.**

TB and Rheumatism are seen amongst the old aged groups. It is observed more in women than in men. The reason for this could be malnutrition, and living in crowded and windowless houses.

Health care facilities and clinics are non existent in any of the districts visited. There are one or two shops in the bazaar in Tulak and Shahrak which sell drugs, along with groceries. Professional doctors and trained medical assistants capable of providing basic curative care for the most common diseases are not available. There are a few basic health workers around.

There is a modern hospital in Chikhcharan, center of the province. Dr. Naem and Dr. Nabi Yagana are the only qualified doctors amongst its 60 staff. There was no medicine, no laboratory facilities and no other essential supplies. The electric generator in the X Ray section was also out of order.

Pregnant women deliver their babies at home. Assistance to the ladies are given by Daia (traditional birth attenders), mother or mother in law. The pregnant ladies are not vaccinated during

pregnancy.

Drugs are not frequently prescribed. The majority of people turn to the traditional healer/practitioners (Mullahs, Hakims).
During the EPI programs jointly launched by WHO and the Afghan government in 1995 only limited number of children in Tulak district and Chikhcharan, were vaccinated against 6 target diseases (TB, Diphtheria, pertussis, tetanus, polieomyelitsis and measles). Therefore, the mortality and morbidity rate amongst children is quite high and the villagers mentioned it to be 10-15 %.

Adequate toilet facilities are rare in Ghor. 70 % of the households use " outside the house" but only 30% of the households i.e. the women use pit Latrine (Kenarab). Building and using of the pit latrines are not very common in rural areas of Ghor.

3. Shelter:

Houses in Ghor are muddy or made of unbaked bricks. The well-to-do families live comfortably in spacious, ventilated and well furnished houses.

An average villager dwells in the quarters that have no windows. In some houses a window pane has been fixed on the wall which allows in the sun light.

The houses have no electricity and are very crowded: 3-6 persons per room. In some houses the rooms the floors were bare. It had no carpets or gleems or filth laid on. The rooms are used for multi purposes; sleeping, eating and living.

All the belongings are neatly packed on the rafts. Plates and some other china wares inside hand woven meshes are hung on the walls. A metal stove is installed in each room for heating purposes.

The entrance door of the main room opens to a foyer which is used as a place for storing the winter supplies.
The houses have cellars which are normally used as stables. Most of the villagers pile up their hay and butas (fuel shrubs) in the open near the house.

Houses are used during cold seasons but in summer time almost all the villagers move to summer camps. Residents in warm valleys like Tagao Eshlan in Tulak and Ghok village in Shahrak districts told us that during summer staying in the houses become unbearable due to bugs, mosquitoes, fleas and flies. The other reasons for going to the summer houses was to save their crops and the pastures from being eaten and spoiled by village cattle.

4. Clothing:

The average villagers in Ghor generally wear a shelwar kames, turban, rubber or plastic shoes and a jacket. The pyjamas on them seemed quite patchy. The majority of villagers have only two sets of clothes.

The footwear used by the inhabitants are mostly made of rubber, imported from Herat. Numerous patches were observed on them. Because of extensive walking, footwear is worn out quickly. Mostly the shoes are used without socks. One pair of plastic foot wear costs Afs. 25.000-30,000, and it lasts only a maximum of3-4 months.

5. Fuel and energy:

Buta (brushwood) is the major source fuel and energy. Kerosine is only used for lighting of the house. The price of kerosine is very high and unaffordable for many households. The amount of buta needed for cooking, baking and heating by an average household is estimated to be 20-50 donkey loads annually.

Besides animal dung, fruit trees, mountain forests; such as pistachios, almond and khenjak (Pistacia Cabulica) are also cut and used as fuel wood. This has resulted in the extensive deforestation and denudation of the mountains. The locals were complaining about severe floods and land slides in recent years, but are not aware of the effects they are having on the eco- systems.

In the past a man from the forestry department was responsible for looking after the trees. He would reprimand those who cut the trees in the mountains. Nowadays that man does not exist and the trees are getting cut down

Presently the people are not faced with shortage of fuel wood. But in future they will, because at the rate the brushwood are cut, it will not regrow.

6. Women:

Though our small survey team had no direct access to the women, the women in Ghor are the queens of their castles (houses). They are generally confined to their homes, doing the cooking, raising the children and doing the domestic chores. The women are mostly involved in gleem and carpet weaving which is a source of cash income for the households.

The girls are wedded at their early ages i.e 14 years. Some girls get engaged to their cousins shortly after they are born. The women seems to be quite fertile, no birth control facilities such as contraceptives or pills are available. The Crude Birth Rate (CBR) is 71/1000.

As far as marriage is concerned, the men are in a disadvantageous position. Bridegrooms are expected to pay large sums (in cash or kind) as dowry for their bride. Nobody can pay it in one go. It takes life time savings of a man. There is seldom an age parity between the couples. The bridegrooms are mostly 5-15 years older.

Karim, a 30 years old shepherd, looked after a flock of 300 goats and sheep belonging to people in Karez Eshaq. He was engaged to a girl of 13. He had already paid three million Afs as part of the six million dowry to his father-in-law. He hoped to pay the remainder of the dowry next spring when he was to receive 30 awes as his annual pay (one ewe for each ten sheep he looked after) by then his fiancee will be 14 years old. One of the reasons people get engaged at an early age is to have ample time to earn and gradually pay the dowry to their in laws.

G. SELF IMAGE AND SELF HELP:

The people of Ghor are hard working and friendly. They are aware of their glorious past and take pride in it.

They are self reliant. Cooperation and mutual assistance are embedded in the village culture. They find collective solutions for their common problems like providing free gang labour for cleaning the irrigation canals and harvesting each others' crops.

They are aware of the untapped resources of their country and cherish high hope for a good future for themselves and their children.

They consider remoteness of their homeland and lack of proper attention by the governments as reasons for the " backwardness" in Ghor.

Despite the fact that most of the villagers have never been outside their own districts, or to other provinces or countries, but they have heard from others that Herat has developed immensely during the past few years. They understand it is due to the constructive participation of the NGOs and the UN agencies.

The government officials as well as the community showed great enthusiasm about our survey work. They assured us of their active support and participation in any kind of work we may undertake. Since they are unfamiliar with the NGOs. Organizations will need to build credibility in the community.

H. SERVICES AND SUPPORT:

1. Logistics:

Ghor is accessible from two directions namely from east and west. There are two main roads leading to Ghor from Herat.

a. Yamagak Road (through Chisht):
b. Farsi Road through (Shindand):

1.a. Yamagak Road is 300 Km long. It takes 2-3 days to get to the centre of Ghor. There are three main passes along this road to Ghor {Yamagak, shakhzak (talagak) and Talkhaw}. They are all located in Shahrak district. They are steep with many hair pen bends and high gradient passes.

2.b. The Farsi Road is rather longer (420 km). It takes 3-4 days. The drivers prefer to use this road as an egress rout and the first as regress rout. The security along this route was poor in the past because dacoits were attacking the vehicles. Since the advent of Taliban the security along the road has improved.

Both the roads converge in Do Laena east of Shahrak bazaar. All the roads linking Ghor with the neighbouring provinces, including the ones leading to various districts within Ghor, are dirt roads, which are loose and dusty or rough and rocky. The average speed of the vehicles on these roads is 10-15 km/h.

The in-going trucks are customarily overloaded and the drivers prefer to use the **Farsi** road to avoid climbing the high passes. The out coming trucks which are mostly unloaded or light loaded take the **Yamagak** road which is shorter and easy to cross the bed of Hari Rod river. (The bridge over Hari Rod river is damaged and impassable for vehicles).

Because of the excess precipitation in winter all the roads to Ghor get closed for 5-6 months (December to May).

The other roads reaching Ghor from the east (Through Ghazni and Bamyan) are equally treacherous and mostly not used.

2. Transportation:

There are no proper commuter services to Ghor from Herat such as coaches or buses. Only heavily loaded trucks and lorries carrying goods haul people too. The truckers charge the passengers fully for the entire length of the journey. The truck fare is 50,000 to 70,000 Afs per person. Transport facilities within the districts and the villages are non existent. Horses, mules, donkeys and oxen are the only means of transportation.

3. Trading:

Most of the consumer goods are brought from Herat. Livestock is a major item exported to the neighbouring provinces besides other items; such, as animal skins, rugs, dried fruits, dried yogurt balls and cumin. Chikhcharan, once the only live stock market, has recently lost its importance. Babul in the south, Dawlat Yar in the east have emerged as markets for animal sale.

There are a few shops available in the district centres. In the far off villages some shops can be found with limited supplies of essential goods. There are about 200 shops in Chikhcharan, 80 in Shahrak and 50 in Tulak district. There are no specialized shops anywhere in Ghor. All shops sell the same goods.

4. The agencies working in Ghor:

Oxfam works exclusively in Lal u Sarjangal. It is thinly stretched out and works in agriculture and irrigation sectors. It also runs a special hospital for lepers. Ansari, is an Afghan NGO which has cleaned a few irrigation canals in Saghar and Shahrak districts. WFP had provided wheat for the cleaning of 37 km of canals under the wheat for work programs.

I. GOVERNMENT SERVICES:

Government services are non existent in the district. In Chikhcharan, centre of the province, all the essential governmental departments exist as names on the paper, except health and education which provide limited services. The rest render no services to the public at all.

1. Education:

According to Mohammad Qasim, head of the training and education department, there are 158 schools in the province; 5 high schools, 9 intermediate and the 138 primary schools including four for the girls and the remainder for the boys. A total of 22,000 students attended schools in the province this year. Since all the school buildings have been destroyed, training sessions are conducted in the mosques under tents or in some private houses. There are no printed books, stationary, desks or benches for the schools. The students squat on the ground or sit on big stones.

J. CONCLUSIONS:

* Food security (production of the food grains) in Ghor depends on nature and the climatic changes. Since most of the agricultural land is rain fed, drought will certainly deprive the farmer of the meagre yield.

* Generally yield per unit of land is low in Ghor and the small farmers cannot produce enough to feed them from harvest to harvest. The exact number of households falling in this category is not known. It is guesstimated to be 15-20 % .
Lack of traction power coupled with short duration sowing season means the farmer is unable to plow and sow enough land to sustain him up to the next harvest.

* Animal diseases play havoc on the livestock. Animal losses is high during winter (15-25%). Provision of winter fodder for the long winter season is a constraint. It compels the livestock owners to keep small number of animals.

* 15-20 % of the population is under nourished, amongst them the children and the women suffer most. Caloric intake of the households drops further during winter because of the poor diet.

* Drinking water is generally polluted and sanitation was very poor in the areas visited. Animals and humans used the same polluted water. Most of the germs causing diarrhoeal diseases are water born. Mosquito population causes malaria and swarms the villages.

* There are no adequate curative or preventive health care facilities in Tulak and Shahrak districts or its villages. Lack of awareness has propounded the problem. An easily curable disease such as appendixites or malaria proves fatal.

* There is immense scope for developing the handicraft industry, particularly of carpet and gleem weaving industry. Introduction of new and modern equipment, showing new methods of producing dye from the natural herbs will positively affect this industry.

K. RECOMMENDATIONS:

* Improvement of existing irrigation systems and construction of new irrigation structures will decrease the dependency of the people on the nature for food production. Application of "A frame" technique will facilitate effective watering of the sloppy plots.

* Improved agricultural practices to replace the traditional ones and weed control practice will result in better cropping and improved output.

* Provision of veterinary services along with animal clinics will really arrest the devastating diseases which drastically reduce the livestock and curtail the steady increase in the animal husbandry.

* Introduction and popularization of new varieties of vegetables along with demonstrative cooking as part of nutritional education will improve the quality of the daily diet.

* Spraying of the village areas and improvement of drinking water systems, introduction of water filter, chlorination of cisterns will improve the quality of drinking water and thus the health status.

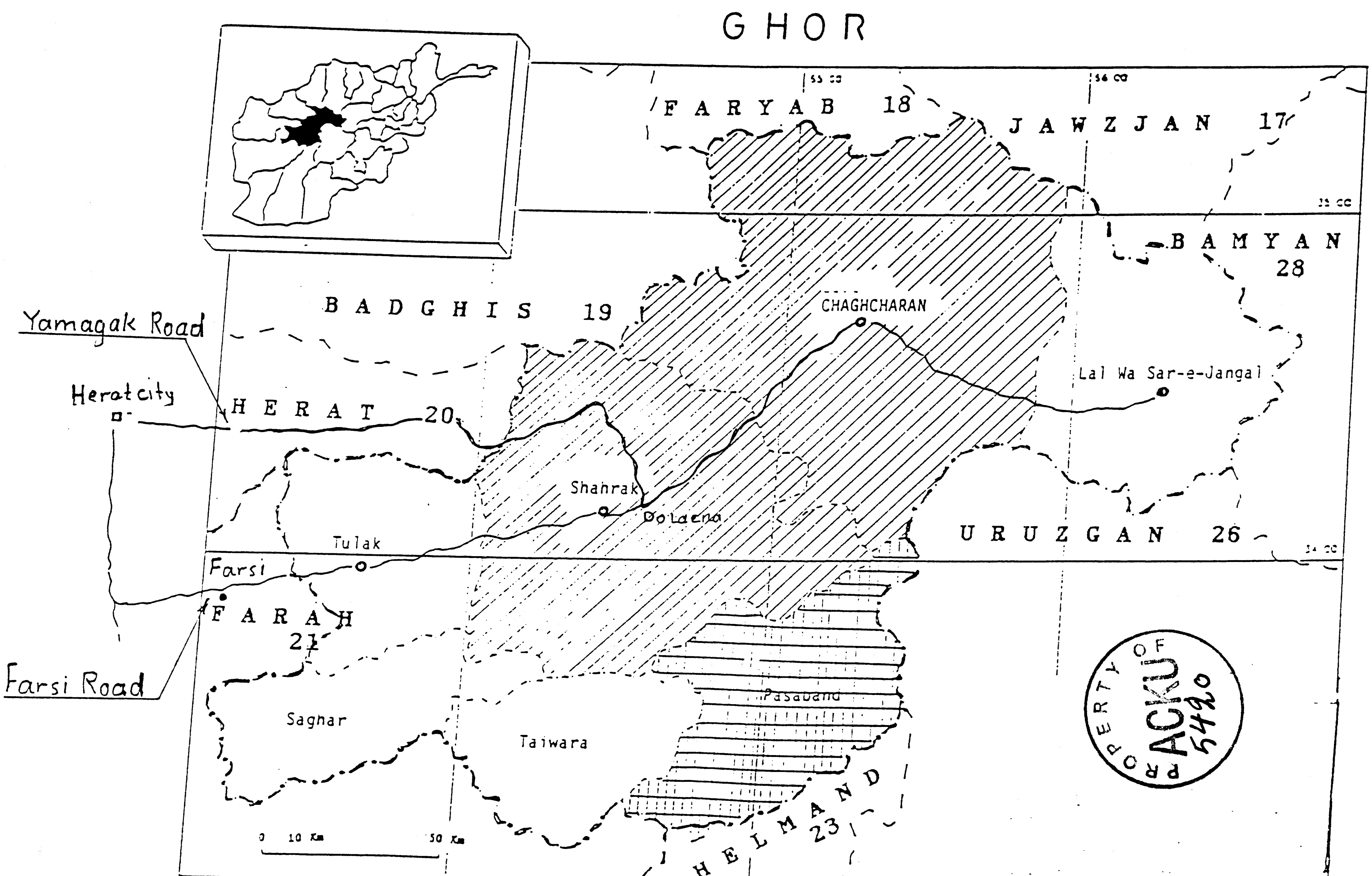
* Provision of health education to the local community specially to mothers about nutrition, hygiene and oral rehydration therapy and full range of immunization will positively impact the community.

* The rich pastures in Ghor have great potential for meat producing industries. Proper ranch management along with new species of meat producing cattle will make Ghor one of the major meat producing centres in the area.

* Improvement of the road network within the province and the Herat-Ghor roads will tangibly impact life in Ghor.

* Shahrak is the largest district, centrally located in the province. Both the access roads from the west converge at Do Laena in Shahrak (annex A). Thus Shahrak is recommended as the ideal place for a sub office.

Annex - A


GHOR
FARYAB 18
JAWZJAN 17
BAMYAN 28
BADGHIS 19
HERAT 20
URUZGAN 26
FARAH 21
HELMAND 23
Yamagak Road
Herat city
Farsi Road
Farsi
Tulak
Shahrak
Dolaena
CHAGHCHARAN
Lal Wa Sar-e-Jangal
Saghar
Taiwara
Pasaband
0 10 Km 50 Km